

Message Text

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TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XC

SUBJECT: WEEKLY STATUS REPORT -- THAILAND, INDONESIA,
MALAYSIA, BURMA AND SINGAPORE AFFAIRS

INDONESIA

CURRENT SCENE (CONF)

AMBASSADOR MASTER IS DUE TO LEAVE TODAY AND RETURN FRIDAY
ON THE EAST TIMOR TRIP BEING HOSTED BY FONMIN MOCHTAR.
THE GOI HAS ALSO RELEASED SIX ADDITIONAL STUDENTS/YOUTHS
PICKED UP IN THE PRE-MPR PERIOD FOR ALLEGED TERRORISM AND
GRANTED LEBARAN HOLIDAYS AT HOME FOR MOST OF THE OTHER
STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS STILL BEING DETAINED, INCLUDING
THE WELL-KNOWN POET W.S. RENDRA.

EAST TIMOR (SECRET)

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A SENIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER TOLD AMBASSADOR MASTERS
SEPT 5 THAT THE TWO TOP FREtilin LEADERS IN EAST TIMOR
HAD RECENTLY BEEN CAPTURED AND THAT THE GOI IS CONVINCED
THAT THE BACK OF THE REBELLION HAS BEEN BROKEN. AMB
MASTERS USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO AGAIN URGE ACCESS BY THE
CRS AND ICRC. MEANWHILE IN NEW YORK, THE COMMITTEE OF 24

HELD A PERFUNCTORY SESSION ON EAST TIMOR AND DECIDED TO CONSIDER THE MATTER AGAIN NEXT YEAR. THE FOCUS NOW SHIFTS TO THE UNGA WHICH WILL HAVE ON THE AGENDA ANOTHER FRETILIN-DRAFTED RESOLUTION. THE VOTING TREND IS IN INDONESIA'S FAVOR, BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY TO MOVE SUFFICIENTLY FAR FOR THE RESOLUTION TO BE DEFEATED. NONETHELESS, UNGA INTEREST IN THE MATTER SEEMS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO DECREASE.

LNG CONTRACT -- STILL HANGING (CONF)

THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOW ALMOST AT THE POINT OF CANCELLATION OF THE LONG-PENDING PACIFIC INDONESIAN LNG CONTRACT. THE EMBASSY REPORTS THAT THIS IS A REAL POSSIBILITY IF THE CRUCIAL PRICE ESCALATOR QUESTION IS NOT RESOLVED BY THE END OF SEPTEMBER. WHILE WE WERE ENDEAVORING TO SECURE FROM DOE A FULLY RESPONSIVE REPLY TO AN EARLIER EMBASSY CABLE ON THE STATUS OF LNG ISSUES, AMBASSADOR MASTERS REPORTED ON A MEETING WITH MINISTER WIDJOJO IN WHICH HE STRESSED THE SERIOUS IMPACT OF THE BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS AND UNCERTAINTY OF THE LNG CONTRACT UPON US-INDONESIAN RELATIONS. INITIAL LOWER LEVEL DRAFTS FOR EMBASSY JAKARTA WERE UNSATISFACTORY AND THE MATTER HAS NOW BEEN ESCALATED TO SENIOR DOE LEVELS AS WE SEEK A FULL AND FRANK OUTLINE FOR REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS. MEANWHILE,

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FORBES MAGAZINE HAS JOINED THE BANDWAGON OF GROUPS CRITICAL OF DOE DELAYS.

MALAYSIA

US-MALAYSIAN CONSULTATIONS ON TIN AND RUBBER (CONF)

AS SUGGESTED BY EMBASSY K.L., WE AGAIN DISCUSSED WITH EB THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING CONSULTATIONS WITH MALAYSIA ON RUBBER AND TIN AT A POLITICAL LEVEL. EA WILL SEND A MEMO ENCOURAGING BOSWORTH TO VISIT K.L. BEFORE THE OCTOBER ITC MEETING BUT THERE IS SOME QUESTION THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO SCHEDULE A VISIT IN THE TIME FRAME DESIRED. EB STILL TAKES STRONG EXCEPTION TO THE GOM'S ARGUMENTATION THAT TAXATION AND LICENSING OF TIN PRODUCERS ARE INTERNAL MATTERS NOT SUITABLE FOR ITC DISCUSSIONS. WHILE EB IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES BILATERALLY WITH THE GOM, IT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO SEE THAT THEY ARE RAISED IN THE ITC.

FMS

CONTRARY TO OUR EARLIER BELIEF, THE FY 80 FMS LEVEL OF 10 MILLION DOLS DID NOT FALL WITHIN THE CURRENT OMB

CEILING. WE ARE THUS LEFT WITH 7 MILLION DOLS REQUESTED OR ROUGHLY ONE-HALF OF THE PENDING FY 79 TOTAL OF 13 MILLION DOLS (WHICH MAY BE REDUCED BY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION).

THAILAND

WAGE INCREASES (LOU)

THE RTG ANNOUNCED INCREASES IN MINIMUM WAGE RATES EFFECTIVE OCT 1, VARYING BY REGION WITH THE HIGHEST

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MINIMUMS IN BANGKOK.

THE MINIMUM WAGE ANNOUNCEMENT IS PART OF A PACKAGE OF MEASURES DESIGNED TO RAISE INCOMES OF WORKERS, FARMERS, STATE ENTERPRISE EMPLOYEES, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATED MEASURE IS A CABINET DECISION TO RAISE THE TARGET PRICE OF PADDY RICE.

DECISIONS ON WAGES AND RICE PRICES APPEAR TO BE POLITICALLY INSPIRED COMPROMISES DESIGNED TO DIFFUSE URBAN WORKERS DEMANDS, ALLAY BUSINESS INTERESTS FEARS OF INFLATIONARY LABOR PRESSURES, AND SUPPORTING RTG EFFORTS TO INCREASE INCOMES OF THE RURAL POOR. THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ANNOUNCED INCREASES IS YET TO BE ASSESSED. CHRISTOPHER

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